

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for examining the application, and for indicating that claims 10-11 and 23-24 are allowed, and that claims 2, 5, 7-9, 15, 18, 20-22, and 26-27 are objected to and would be allowable, if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have canceled claims 2, 15, and 27, and have amended claims 1, 14, and 25 to include the limitations formerly present in claims 2, 15, and 27, respectively. Applicants have similarly amended claims 12 and 13 (the means plus function and computer program product analogs to claim 1) to include limitations similar to those formerly present in claim 2. Support for the amendment of claims 1, 12-14, and 25 may be found throughout the specification, and the amendment of claims 1, 12-14, and 25 does not constitute the addition of new matter. With the amendment, claims 1, 3-14, and 16-26 are now pending.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 12-14, 16-17, 19, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,247,059 to Johnson et al.

Applicants have amended Applicants' independent claim 1 to include the limitations formerly present in Applicants' dependent claim 2, now canceled. As the Examiner indicated that Applicants' former dependent claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including the limitations found in the base claim and any intervening claims, Applicants' respectfully submit that Applicants' amended independent claim 1 is now allowable over Johnson et al.

Applicants similarly amended Applicants' independent claims 14 and 25, respectively, by incorporating the limitations formerly found in now canceled dependent claims 15 and 27, which the Examiner had also indicated would be allowable if written in independent form, including the limitations found in the base claim and any intervening

claims. Thus, Applicants' respectfully submit that Applicants' amended independent claims 14 and 25 are also now allowable over Johnson et al.

Finally, Applicants' have similarly amended Applicants' independent claims 12 and 13. There are no claims that depend from Applicants' amended independent claims 12 and 13. However, Applicants' amended independent claim 12 is a means plus function analog to Applicants' allowable amended independent claim 1, and Applicants' amended independent claim 13 is a computer program product analog to Applicants' allowable amended independent claim 1. In other words, these claims now include limitations similar to those of Applicants' allowable amended independent claim 1, and thus Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' amended independent claims 12 and 13 are also allowable over Johnson et al.

Applicants' dependent claims 3, 4, 6, 16-17, and 19 depend from, respectively, Applicants' allowable amended independent claims 1 and 14. Therefore, for at least the reason(s) given above with regards to Applicants' allowable amended independent claims 1 and 14, Applicants' dependent claims 3, 4, 6, 16-17, and 19 are themselves allowable over Johnson et al.

Finally, Applicants' dependent claims 5, 7-9, 18, 20-22, and 26 depend from, respectively, Applicants' allowable amended independent claims 1, 14, and 25. Therefore, for at least the reason(s) given above with regards to Applicants' allowable amended independent claims 1, 14, and 25, Applicants' dependent claims 5, 7-9, 18, 20-22, and 26 are themselves allowable over Johnson et al.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe this Amendment and Response to be fully responsive to the present Office Action. Thus, based on the foregoing Remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request allowance of the application.

Applicants hereby petition for any extension of time required to maintain the pendency of this case. If there is any fee occasioned by this response that is not paid, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-3735.

Should the enclosed papers or fees be considered incomplete, Applicants respectfully request that the Patent Office contact the undersigned collect at the telephone number provided below.

Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the Applicants' undersigned Attorney if any issues are deemed to remain prior to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

/SPM/

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